

DIRECTIONS FOR 13.
Seekers & Expectants.

O R

A Guide for weake Christians
in these distracted times.

Wherein the language of *Sions*-builders is confounded.

As it was delivered in a Sermon at *Wickham-Market*.

Preached on purpose to settle poore
weake Christians, who are in great danger
of miscarrying, by reason of seducers,
in these erroneous times.

Published at the earnest intreatie of many,
for a more publique good.

By ZEPH: SMITH, Minister of *Wickham-*
Market in Suffolke.

P S A L. 25. 9. 12.

*who so among you feares the Lord, him will he teach : the humble
will he teach his way.*

May the 16th 1646.

Imprimatur, John Downame.


L O N D O N,

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TO THE READER.

 Hristian Reader, we find in Gen.
11. that when the Language was
confounded of Babels-builders,
the work of building did cease; so
now the language being confound-
ed of Sions-builders, and they that should
pronounce Shibboleth, pronounce Sibboleth,
it is a great obstacle in the way to hinder the
establisment of peace and truth amongst us,
never had the devill a more subtle chaine, then
he hath now under the notion of New-light,
to lead people in the dark road to eternall end-
less darkness. The searcher of all hearts know-
eth, that at the preaching of this Sermon, I had
no intent it should ever have been thus pub-
lique, knowing my own weaknesse and inability
for the publique good, but being since impor-
tuned to put it to the Presse; and the conside-
ration of the multitude of people that are sedu-
ced in these dayes by erroneous persons, of poore
weak

TO THE READER.

Weak Christians, called Expectants and Seekers, who take notice of so many severall opinions, that they suppose no body is in the right way, and therefore will waite untill God discover some new way to them, which was never yet heard of. To whom I have given Directions in my Sermon what to doe, that they might know the way of God, and no longer halt between two opinions. These causes moved me to consent to the publishing of it; and Christian Reader, when thou readeest, whether thou findest a bilitie or weaknesse, let God have the glory, who giveth to every one as it pleaseth him; and if God may have the glory, and any poore Christian be by the reading of it the better established in the truth, and for the time to come try before he trust, the Author shall have his desires, who is willing, God inabling him, to spend and be spent for the same purpose; which that it may be, the Author will pray, and rest

Yours in the Lord Jesus Christ,

ZEPH: SMITH



DIRECTIONS FOR SEEKERS AND WEAKE CHRISTIANS in these distracted Times.

PSAL. 119. 102.

— *For thou hast taught mee.*



His *Psalme* is a *Psalme* of *David*, and as the whole Booke of *Psalmes* is full of heavenly matter, and soule-ravishing expressions; so this *Psalme* is in a speciall manner. The man of God was much taken up with God, and his Word, his Statutes, and Judgements, in so much, that he knew not how to meditate enough, and how to speake enough of it; the Prophet found such a sweetnesse in Gods Word, that notwithstanding he knew much of it, yet still he desires to know more, and therefore it is his expression very often in the *Psalmes*, *Lord, teach*; and, *Oh, teach me thy statutes*. The Prophet *David* was not of the minde that proud generation is of, that say, they know as much as all the Preachers in the Countrey can tell them, nay, as much as God himselfe can teach them, they thinke, otherwise what meanes that damnable Doctrine that is broached in these dayes, when

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we have received the Spirit, the Letter should cease; contrary to *Revel. 2. 25. That which yee have already, hold fast untill I come.* But the Prophet, though he knew much, yet he desires to know more; neither was the Prophet like that sort of hearers, which may be compared unto the stony ground, *Mat. 13.* who receive the Word into their heads, but not into their hearts, that they might bring forth fruit in their lives, to the honour of God; for in the 11. verse of this *Psalme, Thy word, saith he, have I hid in my heart, that I might not sinne against thee.* The Prophet did not only labour after the knowledge of the Word, but he put it into practice. Neither can it be said of the Prophet, as it may of too too many professors now adayes, they are young Saints and old Devils, they begin in the Spirit, and end in the flesh; the uncleane spirit is cast out for a time, but it returns againe: for the Prophet did persevere in the practicing of those truths which God did teach him, and which he did profess; as appears in the Text; *I have not declined from thy Judgements, for thou hast taught me.* In which consider two things.

First, The Person teaching, *God.*

Secondly, The Person taught, *David.*

From the person teaching, we are not onely to consider who it was, but what it was which he taught, *His Judgements.*

From the person taught, we are to consider; first, his tractableness to learne that which God did teach him; secondly, his constancy in the practice of those truths which God did teach him; thirdly, the ground why he practiced those truths, because God taught him. Give me leave, briefly, to open the words, and then to come to some point of Doctrine. And first, what he meaneth when he saith; *I have not declined*; that is, I have not departed.

parted, or gone backe from the way of thy Judgements ; I have not left the wayes of God, to walke in the wayes of wickednesse. Secondly, What is meant by Judgements ?

Ans. Gods Lawes ; by Judgements is meant his Lawes. Gods Lawes have severall names in Scripture, sometime they are called *his wayes* ; as in *Psal. 119. 1. Sometimes his testimonies*, *Psal. 119. 2. His precepts*, *vers. 4. His statutes*, *vers. 5. His Commandements*, *vers. 6. His Judgements*, *vers. 7.* and the Text ; so in *vers. 13. and vers. 20. Sometimes his word*, *vers. 9.* So that by Judgements, is meant, Gods Statutes, Lawes, and Commandements ; as will appeare if we consider the following verses unto the 107. Then thirdly, What doth the Prophet meane, when he saith, *For thou hast taught me* ? He doth not say, the Ministers my teachers taught me, and therefore I profited by them, but because God taught him, that is, God made the outward Ministry of the Word effectuell by the inward operation of his Spirit ; not that the Prophet did neglect attending on the outward Ministry of the Word, and rested altogether upon the teaching of the Spirit, without the Word ; for the Prophet tooke delight in attending upon the Word preached ; it was the onely thing he desired, *Psal. 27. 4. that he panted after*, *Psal. 42. 1. that he rejoyced in the injoyment of*, *Psal. 84.* Neither did he profit by the outward Ministry of the Word onely ; for *Paul may plant, and Apollo water, but God giveth the increase* ; but God made the outward Ministry of the Word effectuell by the inward operation of the Spirit.

The Text is the ground and reason why the Prophet did profit in Gods Lawes, why he kept them, and was constant in the practise of them, because God taught him ; from whence may arise this poynt of Doctrine.

That God is the best teacher and instructor of his people.

And

And for the method, I, God assisting, will shew you that it is so, and how it appears to be so; secondly, the means by which God doth teach the soule; thirdly, the excellency of Gods teaching above mans teaching; fourthly, the manner; fifthly, the grounds; sixthly, application.

First, That it is so appears in the Text, wherein is set out the excellency of Gods teaching above mans: so in *Job 36.22. Behold, God exalteth by his power; for none teacheth like him*: He is more excellent in his teaching then all others; so that you see that it is so; next, I come to shew you that it must needs be so, as appears three ways.

First, He is the Author of all other faithfull Preachers of the Word, it is God that fits all other faithfull Preachers of the Word for the worke of the Ministry; it is not all the arts and sciences in the world, that can make a man fit for the work of the Ministry, if God fit him not, it is God who maketh able Ministers of the New Testament; as *2 Cor. 3. 6. who hath made us able Ministers of the New Testament, not of the Letter, but of the Spirit*. Arts and Sciences are helps and handmaids to Divinitie, but it is God that makes able Ministers of the New Testament; *And he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers*: He gave, it is, he gave and he fitted for the worke of the Ministry.

Secondly, God is the Author of all the doctrinal truths which all the faithfull Preachers in the world deliver unto people, he is the Author of those truths; he sends all the faithfull Ministers of the Word in his Name to deliver his Message unto his people; *Sonne of man, give them warning from mee, Ezek. 3. 17*. And he sends the Prophets often with this Message; *Goe tell them, Thus saith the Lord*; and, *This is the word of the Lord*: and the Prophets when they delivered his Message unto the people; *Heare ye*

say they, *what the Lord saith*: they did not deliver the devices of their owne braine, but the Word of the Lord; and the Apostles were to teach and observe what Christ had commanded, as *Mat. 28.* last verse: and all the faithfull Ministers of the Gospel now they deliver Gods Message unto the people, and are to deliver nothing but that which they can say, *Thus saith the Lord, Isai. 8. 20.* So that God is the Author of all the truths which the faithfull Ministers of the Word deliver unto the people.

Thirdly, It is the Lord which gives successe to the faithfull preaching of the Word, the Minister can but with the servant of *Elisba*, lay the staffe upon the face of the childe, they can but propound the minde and will of God unto people, preach the Word, and baptize with water, but they cannot make the Word effectuell, and the Sacraments effectuell, that is the work of God; *Paul may plant, and Apollo water, but it is God that gives a blessing; and, It is not in him which willeth, and him which runneth, but in God that gives a blessing;* therefore the Gospe is said to be the power of God through faith to salvation; and the weapons of the word are mightie through God, to the pulling downe of strong holds. Now lay all these together, God is the Author of the Minister, of the doctrine, and of the successe, and it will appeare a plaine truth, that *God is the best teacher of his people.*

Secondly, It appeares God is the best teacher of his people, by the directiōs that the Lord gives in his Word unto teachers and hearers, how they should teach and heare aright; he gives directiōs unto Ministers to study to shew themselves approved of God, *workmen that need not to be ashamed, dividing the word of truth aright, 2 Tim. 2. 15. To preach the word in season and out of season, to reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine,*

Tim. 4. 23. *And convince them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith,* Tit. 1. 3. So he directs people how they should heare aright, he bids them *try the Spirits, whether they be of God,* 1 Joh. 4. 1. As the men of Berea, *who searched the Scriptures,* Acts 17. 11. Hearers should not receive any kind of doctrine for truth, *but try the spirits,* and receive *with meeknesse the ingrafted word,* James 1. 21. Now he that is able to teach both teacher and hearers how they should teach and heare aright, must needs be the best teacher himselfe.

Thirdly, It appeares God is the soules best instructor by the great desire of the Saints to be taught of God, though they enjoy mans teaching, yet this contenteth them not, except God teach them. How often is it the expression of the Prophet *David, Lord teach me,* in Psal. 27. 11. *Teach me thy way, O Lord?* so often in this 119. Psalme, the Prophet begs of God to teach him, in the 12. verse, in vers. 26. & 33. & 66. & 68. & 108. 124. In all these verses the Prophet prayeth to God to teach him. And as this was *Dauids* prayer, so it is the prayer and desire of all such gracious spirits as *David* was. All those that are men and women according to Gods owne heart, as *David* was, will with *David* pray, *Lord teach mee.* Now the great desire of the Saints to be taught of God, shews *God is the soules best instructor, the best teacher of his people.*

In the next place we come to the means, by which God doth teach the soule; and this is two-fold, outwardly by the Ministry of the Word, and inwardly by his Spirit; by the Word and the Spirit, this is the ordinary way; first, by his Word, he teaches his people by the preaching of the Word, 1 Cor. 1. 21. The Lord is pleased *by the foolishnesse of preaching to save them that believe;* that is, by that

that means which the world counts foolishnesse, not that it is foolishnesse in it selfe, but it is so to the wicked, that is, the wicked accounteth it foolishnesse. In vers. 18. the *preaching of the Crosse is to them which perish foolishnesse*, but it is not so to the godly, *to us which are saved it is the power of God*: and therefore Rom. 10. 17. *Faith comes by hearing*; this is the ordinary means the Lord hath appointed for the working faith in the hearts of his people; this is the outward meanes. But then secondly, there is the inward teaching of the soule, and that is by the Spirit, the Lord teaches his people by his Spirit, that is, the Lord makes the outward Ministry of the Word effectually by the inward operation of the Spirit, when he shews a divine power and authoritie in the preaching of the Word, when he makes it become mightie and powerfull in operation, to the pulling downe of strong holds; as in 2 Cor. 10. 4. That is, to the pulling downe of the strong holds in the heart, that exalt themselves against the Lord Jesus Christ, and prepare the heart for Christ; this is the worke of the Spirit, and without this the letter doth not profit the people, but God therefore teaches his people by his Spirit, he hath revealed them to us by his Spirit; for the *Spirit searches the deepe things of God*, 1 Cor. 2. 10. It is the Spirit that causes the Word to take impression upon the hearts of people; and therefore when the Lord maketh the Ministry of the Word successefull, the Ministers are made able Ministers of the Spirit, as in 2 Cor. 3. 6.

In the third place, I am to shew you the excellency of Gods teaching above mans; and that appeares foure wayes.

First, Earthly teachers can but propound the mind and will of God unto the people, they cannot make the soule

to stoop to those truths, and practice those truths which they teach; but herein appears the Excellency of Gods teaching above mans, he can make the soule to yeeld obedience unto the truth delivered, he can bring the soule under the power of those truths. See the Prophet *David's* expression to this purpose, *Psal. 38. 2. Thine arrowes sticke fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore*: When God comes to teach a soule, he will shoot the arrowes so fast, that it shall take impression, the soule shall come under the power of truths, so that the soule shall say, Lord I would faine have shaken off thine arrowes, but am not able, for they sticke fast in mee. And thus God did teach those in the *Acts*, *Acts. 2. 39. when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts*; it was not the bare words of the Apostle, when he told them, *You are the parties that have crucified the Lord of glory*, that did pricke their hearts, but the Lord set it home to their consciences, and brought them under the power of that truth they heard, not onely the voyce of man, but the voyce of God in that word of truth, and then they were pricked in their hearts. And thus God did teach *Lydia*, he opened her heart, and then shee attended to that which *Paul* spake, *Acts 16. 14. It was not Paul* opened her heart, but God opened *Lydia's* heart. A man may heare a thousand Sermons, and yet get no good, if he heare onely the voyce of a man, but if the day of Gods power come upon the soule, that he heare the voyce of God in the Ordinances, then he shall profit; for Gods voyce in his Word is a commanding voyce, *Job 36. 10. He commanded them to returne from iniquitie*. Gods teaching the soule is with a command, with such Authoritie, as the soule cannot resist it. And herein appears the excellency of Gods teaching the soule above mans.

Secondly,

Secondly, Gods teaching the soule is more excellent then mans, if wee consider the time of his teaching the soule. The Minister can teach them but some times, *in season and out of season*, but God can teach the soule at all times, in the absence of teachers; for either our teachers may be taken from us, or wee from them, but God can then teach the soule.

2. If we consider the place where he doth teach, the Minister doth preach in the publique assembly, but God can teach in all places, and teach at once in all places, which no other teacher can doe.

3. If wee consider the persons which he doth teach, the Minister doth preach but to some of Gods people, but God doth teach all his people himselfe, they are all taught of him. And as God doth teach all his people, so he can teach them all at once; the Minister can teach but some at once, but God can teach all the Congregations that doe assemble together at once, he is not so much employed in one Congregatiō, but he can be as much in another at one and the same time to teach his people. So that consider the time, the place, and the persons, and in all these it will appeare Gods teaching is more excellent then mans.

Thirdly, Gods teaching the soule is more excellent then mans; it appeares if we consider the infallibilitie of Gods teaching and instructing his people, he is an infallible teacher, he doth teach the soule infallible truths. Earthly teachers are not infallible teachers, though they be faithfull and endeavour to deliver the truth, and nothing but the truth unto people, yet they are but men, and may erre; but God cannot erre in teaching of his people, for he doth teach his people according to his Word, which is infallible: *Heaven and earth shall perisb, but not*

one jot or tittle shall fall. But here may arise an objection, God doth teach his people by the outward Ministry of the Word, but the Minister is not infallible, *ergo*, God is not an infallible teacher of his people. *Ans.* The Word of God is an infallible Word, and this is that God doth teach his people by: then secondly, it is when the Minister hits upon the true interpretation of Scripture, when he doth give the true sense and meaning of the Holy Ghost from a Text that the Spirit of God doth accompany it, and make it profitable unto the people; for wee must note the Spirit of God doth not goe along with a false interpretation of Scripture, but with the true sense; for Gods Spirit doth accompany the truth man delivers, and not the error; so that still it will hold a truth, *Man may erre, but God is the infallible teacher and instructor of his people.*

Fourthly, The excellency of Gods teaching above mans, appears in the sutablenesse of the matter to the persons condition which he doth teach: Ministers may endeavour to prepare matter sutable to the conditions of the people they teach, but they may be mistaken; but the Lord knows the hearts of all his people, and he knows what truths are most sutable to their conditions, and he doth teach them sutable to their conditions. Suppose a spirit be wounded, which is a burthen who can beare? The Lord will come with sutable matter to such a soule, he tels it, I have sent Jesus Christ for to bind up the broken-hearted sinner, *Isai. 61. 1.* And the Sonne of man is come to seeke and save lost sinners, such as fee themselves lost, *Luk. 18. 11.* Nay, he bids them come, *Come all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will ease you;* that is, you that feele sinne a burthen, and strive to get from under this burthen, come to me and I will ease

you

you. Suppose the soule be sicke, he propounds Christ as a Physitian to the sick-soule; if the soule be hungry and thirsty after righteousness, he propounds Christ as bread of life, and water of life, and invites poore soules to come to him; *Hoe, every one that thirsteth, come yee to the waters, come buy without silver and without money, Isai. 54. 1. And if any man thirst, let him come unto mee and drinke, Joh. 7. 37.* Suppose a soule be in depths of desertion, walke in darkness, and see no light, but when he looks up to heaven, and thinkes upon God, he is troubled, *Psal. 77. 3.* It thinks that God hath forsaken it, and will never returne againe in mercy, the Lord doth say to such a soule, *Let him trust in the Name of the Lord, Isai. 50. 10. For a moment in my anger I hid my face, but with everlasting mercy I had compassion on thee, saith the Lord, Isai. 54. 8.* Suppose a soule should suffer the losse of all for Christs sake; *He that leaveth houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, shall receive an hundred-fold in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting.* Not that they shall receive for the losse of one wife a hundred, or of one house a hundred, but that comfort that will make up all a hundred-fold, *Mat. 19. 29.* Suppose a soule be to suffer for Christs sake, *I will (saith the Lord) be with thee in the fire, and the water, as Isai. 43. 4. that it shall not hurt thee:* So to the poore soule that doth say, Sinne will overcome me, and get the day when I have done what I can, and I shall never be able to overcome such and such corrupti-
ons, I shall never be able to overcome Satans temptations; Well, saith the Lord, *Sinne shall not have dominion over your mortall bodies, Rom. 6. 14. And the God of peace shall tread Satan under your feet shortly, Rom. 6. 20. And we shall ever be able to plucke my sheep out of my hands, Joh. 10. 28.* So the soule that is ignorant of Gods wayes, and
cries.

cryes out, Oh I know not whether I be in the right way or no, there are so many severall opinions. *I will teach thee* (saith the Lord) *in the way that thou shalt goe*, Psal. 32. 8. *And thy eares shall heare a voyce behinde thee, saying, This is the way*, Isai. 30. 21. And as in these, so in any condition that the Lord doth teach futable to the condition of the soule. And thus having shewed you the excellency of Gods teaching his people above mans; it followes next to shew you the manner of his teaching.

First, The Lord doth teach the soule to know its misery without Jesus Christ, he opens the understanding, and inlightneth the minde, and causeth the soule to see its lost condition. Secondly, He doth it with power, the day of his power came upon the soule, *the people shall be willing in the day of thy power*, Psal. 110. The Lord doth not onely open the understanding, & inlighten the mind, but causeth the soule to lye under the power of those truths. Then thirdly, he doth use arguments of conviction, by which he doth convince the sinner of his misery, and of the necessitie of Jesus Christ. When the soule objects, It is but the opinion of the Minister, and God is mercifull, and he that made us, will save us. The Lord makes answer, It is not the Minister, but the Scripture, that *concludes all under sinne*, Gal. 3. 22. And whereas thou sayest, God is mercifull; *He that heares the words of this curse, and bleisseth himselfe in his heart, and saith, I shall have peace, though I walke according to the imagination of my heart, the Lord will not be mercifull to him; nay, his wrath and jealousy shall smoake against him*, Deut. 29. 19. *And he that made you, will not save you, and he that formed you, will not have mercy on you*, Isai. 27. 11. And the Lord doth not onely propound this unto the soule, but brings the soule under the power of these truths: the Lord beats the sinner of

all the props he leans upon besides Jesus Christ the Lord, makes all the arguments effectually, if he speak, it is done; if he say to the blind eyes, be opened, and to the deafe eares, be opened, they shall be opened; if he say to the dead soule, live, it shall live; in that day the eares of the deafe shall be opened, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscuritie and darknesse, and the dead shall heare the voyce of Jesus Christ and live; and so it is with whatsoever the Lord teacheth the soule, whether in the worke of preparation for Christ, or direction how to live after the soule hath received Christ, the Lord doth not onely propound the truth to them, but brings them under the power of it.

Next we come to the Reasons, why God is the best instructor of his people.

God is the best instructor of his people, because he is the ablest teacher and instructor of his people, he is the ablest for matter, manner, and measure; first, he is the ablest for matter; that which God teacheth is infallible truth, now there is no man that is infallible for matter; for the doctrine of faithful Ministers may have much failing in it, they are men and may erre, but God cannot erre, all that he teacheth the soule is truth, infallible truth, nothing but truth, truth without mixture, and there is no truth the soule desires to have cleared up, but God is able to do it, and not onely a part of truth, but the whole truth. A poore soule may goe to this Minister, and that Minister, and say, Sir, I would faine be resolved, whether such and such a thing be truth, and they may direct them so farre as they can, but when they have done what they can, yet the partie may be in a great part unresolved, why, Ministers know but in part, but God knows the whole truth, and is able to teach the soule the whole truth. But

1. *Reas.*

I pray, mistake me not, I speake now what God is able to doe, I doe not say that God doth teach his people the whole knowledge of the whole truth; for in this life we know but in part; but I say, God is able to teach his people the whole knowledge of the whole truth, and therefore he is the ablest teacher of his people. Secondly, he is the ablest for the manner, he causeth that he teacheth to take impression upon the heart, which no other teacher is able to doe. Thirdly, he is the ablest for measure, all the matter that is in all the faithfull Preachers in the world, they had it from him, as the fountaine and originall of it, it is he that filled all the Prophets with matter, and all the Apostles, and all the faithfull Ministers of the Word, looke what abilitie they have, they have it from him, looke what abilitie one hath above another, God gave it him, who distributeth to every one as he pleaseth, all their knowledge, and abilities, and graces, are but streames flowing from the fountaine; now looke what is in the channell, there is much more in the fountaine, now God is the fountaine, they have but the streames that run in the channell, therefore God is the ablest teacher for the measure.

2. *Reas.* As God is the ablest teacher of his people, so he is the wisest, and therefore the best instructor of his people: for the matter, it is wisdom it selfe, 1 *Cor.* 2. 7. for the manner, with infinite wisdom, if we consider Gods carriage towards the soule when he draws it to himselfe; for the time, he comes in a seasonable time to the soule, either to humble or comfort it; the Minister may apply comfort too soone unto a soule, or sad them they should comfort, and many times the Minister is posed when he lights upon some kinde of people, knows not whether it be best to apply comfort or terrour, or how to deale with

the partie; but the wisdom of God is such as he knows what is futable to the soules condition, and what time is most seasonable, he is wisest for the time.

God is the faithfullest teacher of his people, and therefore the best teacher; Ministers may erre, or be unfaithfull to people, but God is a faithfull teacher and instructor to his people; he is called *the faithfull and true witness*, Rev. 1. 5. God is faithfull who hath called us unto the fellowship of his Sonne Jesus Christ. Two wayes Ministers may deale unfaithfully with their people; first, when they daube them with untempered morter, crying peace, peace, when they should cry, bloud, and warre, and condemnation; as *Jer. 8. 11. They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people with sweet words, crying, peace, peace, when there is no peace*: when Ministers sad the hearts of the righteous, and strengthen the hands of the wicked, this is unfaithfull dealing with people; but secondly, Ministers may deale unfaithfully with people, by teaching corrupt doctrine, when they are erroneous, when they teach lyes for truth, and diabolicall doctrine for the doctrine of Jesus Christ, when they turne people from the truth to errors, and lyes, and heresies, strong delusions, as wofull experience shews in these dayes; it is the practice of many to seeke to turne people from the truth to fables; but God is a faithfull teacher of his people, he doth not flatter any, but tell them right downe as it is with them; if he be not reconciled unto a soule in Jesus Christ, he speaks no peace to that soule, the poore soule may reade the Bible through, but cannot finde God speake one word of peace, God is faithfull in his teaching the soule; amongst all the faithfullest Ministers in the world, there is at some time or other more or lesse a conniving at something, either because they are great men, and they depend upon them,

them, or intimate acquaintance, or neere friends, or fellow-brethren, or some other respect; and if any man should plead he is cleare in this particular, I cannot believe him, for it is naturall to all, but God doth not neither more nor lesse at any time deale unfaithfully with the soule, and therefore he is the faithfullest teacher.

4. *Reas.* Because God is the pitifullest teacher and instructor of his people, for though he denounce woes and judgments against the wicked, yet he is very tender and pitifull unto poore humble soules, that are dejected and cast downe under the burden of sinne, he pities the soule that he finds in its bloud, he is full of pitie and compassion, as the Psalmist saith; and as he is the pitifullest, so he is the comfortablest teacher to the soule; the matter he teaches is full of consolation. Is a poore soule broken-hearted, see how comfortably he speaks to such a soule; as if he should say, Tell that broken-hearted sinner, I am neere to him, I will dwell with him, *Isai. 66. 2. Isai. 57. 15.* I have sent Jesus Christ to bind it up, *Isai. 61. 1.* Tell the poore soule, that is in depths of desertion, and walkes in darknesse, and sees no light, that he should trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay himselfe upon his God; tell the poore soule, that pores upon its unworthinesse, and worthlesnesse, and want of grace, that there is an infinite worth in Jesus Christ, an infinite worthinesse in Jesus Christ, a fulnesse of grace in Christ, and therefore bid them be comforted; the Lord bids his Messengers speak comfortably to his people, Comfort ye my people, comfort ye, will your God say, speake comfortably to *Jerusalem*, tell her that her iniquities are pardoned, *Isai. 40. 1.* The Lord gives his Ministers a charge to comfort his people, tell them from mee, I would have them comforted, tell them my thoughts are thoughts of peace and not

of warre towards them; tell them it is the will of God that his people should have strong consolation, *Heb. 6.* 17. tell them they shall not need to call my love into question, for I have loved them with an everlasting love, and with loving kindnesse drawne them. With a multitude of such like expressions in Scripture; and the Lord doth not onely propound this comfort to the soule, but causeth the soule to apply it; and this no other Minister can doe, therefore God is the pitifullest and the comfortablest teacher of his people.

God is the best instructor of his people, because he is the powerfulllest teacher of his people, he shews a divine authoritie in those truths which he teacheth the soule. *Job 36. 22. God exalteth by his power; for who teacheth like him?* We say of such and such a Minister, he is a powerfull preacher, but yet the most powerfull preacher in the world cannot speake so to a dead soule, as to make it live; but God teacheth with such a power, that if he say to a dead soule live, it shall live, if he say to a hard heart be soft, it shall melt, and the proud spirit shall be humble, and the most stubborne rebellious sinner shall stoope, which no other teacher can doe, therefore God is the soules best teacher, he is the most powerfull teacher. *5. Reas.*

God is the best teacher and instructor of his people, because he is the profitablest teacher; he teacheth the soule nothing but that which is profitable; Ministers may teach much matter that is unprofitable though they be conscientious, but all that God teacheth is profitable: and as all the matter is profitable, so he causeth all he teacheth to profit by it; the Minister may teach a people a long time, and yet not make them profit by his Ministry; but God doth so teach the soule, as it shall profit by that which he teacheth, as *Isai. 48. 17. God teacheth his people*

ple to profit, and there is no lesson God teacheth a soule, but it shall profit by it. I have done with the Reasons, wee come in the next place to the Uses.

1. Use. To informe us, what a happy condition the Church of God is in, they are taught of God, and he is the best instructor of his people, it is one part of the Covenant of grace to teach his Church, and therefore the Church is in a happy condition: First, because it is a great honour and dignity to be taught of God; schollers think it an honour to be preferred to the highest schoole in the world, and to sit on the highest forme; the schoole of Jesus Christ exceeds all the schools in the world, and the matter that is taught in this schoole, is such transcendent matter, as from eternity to eternity is time little enough to admire; nothing in this schoole, but may cause admiration; the tutor, God, the matter, the wisdome in God himselfe, and the manner of teaching of it, by his Spirit. Secondly, the Church being taught of God, they shall be sure to be taught the right way; he shall instruct and *teach thee in the way thou shalt goe*, Psal. 32. 8. He teacheth and instructeth his people in the right way; *Thy eares shall heare a voyce behind thee, saying, This is the way*, Isai. 30. 21. and therefore the condition of the Church must needs be happy, they shall be taught the right way.

Object. If God be the best teacher of his people, and it be such a dignitie to be taught of God, how comes it to passe then that amongst Gods people, or at least such as professe themselves to be Gods people, there is so much divisions and dissensions, and strange opinions, and that they are so contrary one to another in judgement? when we consider this, wee cannot conclude, that it is such a dignitie to be taught of God.

Ans. It is true, amongst professors at this day, there is much difference

difference in judgement ; some are of one opinion, and some of another, some are false into strange and corrupt opinions, but this comes not to passe, because God teacheth his people severall wayes ; but first, because they doe not learne of God, for God is not the Author of the errors that abound amongst professors, but the Author of truth, and that he teacheth the soule is truth, and nothing but the truth, nothing but that which is agreeable to his will, and therefore it is not because God teacheth them corrupt opinions, but because they do not learne of God. Secondly, it comes to passe that amongst professors they hold strange opinions, because as God teacheth the truth and nothing but the truth to his people, so the Devill sows the seeds of division amongst people, where God sows wheate, the Devill sows tares ; where God makes knowne his truth, there the Devill seeks to infect people with errors. Thirdly, it comes to passe by permittance, God is pleased to permit it, he permits it for two causes ; first, for the good of his people, the Lord lets his owne people many times run into strange opinions for a time, that he might bring them back againe, and establish them the more firmly in the truth, and there are none so such Christians as these when the Lord hath brought them back againe, then they will acknowledge their weaknesse, and how subject they are to be misled. Ah, says the poore soule, I had like to have miscarried, and been carried away with such and such corrupt opinions, had not the Lord in mercy brought me back againe ; now they will walke more humbly, and now they will stand up for the truth, and defend it more boldly then they did formerly, they will advise their friends, and bid them take heed of being seduced ; they will try the spirits for the time to come, whether they be of God or no, they will be more earnest with

with God for the time to come, to establish them in the truth. And thus the Lord doth it for the good of his people. Secondly, the Lord permits it out of a just judgement to others, who though they be glorious professors, yet because their hearts are not sound, he will discover them by this means, when they come to forsake the wayes and truths of Jesus Christ, and run into this and that error, and then from one thing to another, till at the length they come to deny the Scriptures, and live prophanely. Thus many come to be discovered in these times. And secondly, he gives them up to their corrupt opinions, and this is a great judgement, when the Lord says to them as to Ephraim, *He is joyned to Idols; let him alone*, Hosea 4. 17. So when the Lord says to them, they are joyned to their corrupt opinions, let them alone, let them hold Atheisme if they will, let them hold Arminianisme, Arianisme, Marcellianisme, Nicolaitanisme, Mahometisme, Anabaptisme, Antinomianisme if they will, let them hold that the soule is mortall, and dyes with the body, and that the Word of God is written traditions, and when they have received the Spirit, the letter should cease, let them alone, I will give them over to these opinions; because they refuse to be guided by the rule of truth, I will give them up to strong delusions, 2 Thes. 2. 11, 12. *Because they received not the truth that they might be saved, therefore God shall send them strong delusions that they should beleewe lyes, that they might be damned which beleewe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousnesse.* But how is it possible you will say, that they should fall from one corrupt opinion to another, do not their own consciences check them? I answer, the conscience of an hereticke is a seared conscience, their conscience is seared with an hot iron, 1 Tim. 4. 2. Who doth the Apostle meane there,

you

you may see in the first verse, such as give heed unto spirits of errours, and doctrines of devils, their consciences are past feeling : When God hath once given a man or woman over, conscience very seldome troubles them, though they fall into horrible blasphemies, yet seldome or never their consciences trouble them; why so? because God hath given them over, and this makes the condition of a man or woman miserable; the Apostle saith, *Heb. 10. 31. It is a fearfull thing to fall into the hands of the living God;* but it is a more fearfull thing to fall out of the hands of God, and therefore their condition is very fearfull.

The second Use is for reproofe; Seeing God is the best teacher and instructor of his people, it reproves them that rest in mans teaching onely, thinke it enough if they come to the Word and Sacraments, and can cry, The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, this is the Temple of the Lord, and their rest, and thinke all well with them, they shall most certainly goe to heaven; but alas, poore soule, thou must know that the outward Ministry of the Word will doe thee no good without the inward operation of the Spirit, it is God that causeth his people to profit, and if thou be not taught of God, as well as of man, thy outward teaching will doe thee no good, thou thinkest it will carry thee to heaven, but it will make thy condemnation the greater, if thou be not bettered by it. Our Saviour Christ did many great workes amongst them of *Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum*, they might as well as thou blesse themselves, they be in a good condition; why so? because they might say, Christ hath preached & wrought many miracles amongst us, and walked up and downe in our streets, wee have had his company, surely we are a happy people; but see what

our Saviour Christ saith of them, *they repented not*: and what follows? *Woe to thee Chorazin, woe to thee Bethsaida, and thou Capernaum that art lifted up to heaven, shalt be thronne downe to hell*, Mat. 11. 21, 22, 23. *And it shall be more easie for them of the land of Sodome at the day of Judgement then for you.* So a people may be lifted up to heaven with meanes, and brought downe to hell for not profiting by it, and their condemnation will be the greater; *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darknesse*, Joh. 3. 19. This is the grand damning sinne, this damnes people with a witnessse, to live under the meanes of grace unprofitable and unfruitfull.

Secondly, It likewise reproves them that take all their Religion upon trust, never with the men of *Berea*, search the Scriptures, *Acts* 17. 11. But if one come with one Doctrine and another with another, he knows not but that they may all speake truth. And some againe tye their Religion to some particular mans sleeve, all that such a man or such a man speakes is truth, as if they were infallible, and contemne others in comparison of them; what is this but to have mens persons in admiration; as *Jude* speakes? Now if God be the best instructor of his people, then we should try the spirits whether they be of God; and though *Paul*, or an Angel from heaven should come and preach contrary to Gods Word, let them be accursed, *Gal.* 1. 8.

3. Use.

The third use is for terror; Is the Lord the best instructor of his people? then wofull is the condition of all them that despise the meanes of grace, that despise Gods teaching of the soule, either outwardly by the Ministry of the Word, or inwardly by the Spirit, that say unto God, *Depart from us, for wee desire not the knowledge of thy* wayes,

sayes, Job 21. 14. And when his Messengers call upon them to aske for the old way, which is the good way, and walke therein; they say, we will not walke therein; the condition of such is very miserable. See two places of Scripture for it, which might terrifie the heart of any wicked wretch, that despiseth the meanes of grace; the one is in Heb. 12. 25. *See that yee despise not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not that refused him that spake on earth, much more shall we not escape if wee turne from him that speaketh from heaven.* Those that slight Christ, and make a light account of him, refuse him and his doctrine; there is no escaping for such, how much more shall wee not escape? The Lord Jesus Christ is the great Prophet of his Church, and *all that will not heare this Prophet, shall be destroyed*, Acts 3. 23. Here is the misery of such poore soules, they shall be destroyed. And how might this terrifie a poore soule, that contemnes the meanes of grace; if I turne from Christ, if I heare not Christ, I shall not escape, I shall be destroyed.

Secondly, It may serve to terrifie such persons as delight in hearing lyes as well as truth, and delight in corrupt doctrine as well as the truth, that say to the Prophets, Prophecy smoothe things to us, and flatter us in our sinnes. Consider but one place of Scripture, Jer. 5. last verse, *The Prophets prophecy lyes, and the Priests receive gifts, and my people delight therein, but what will see then doe in the end thereof?* As much as if he should say, there will come an end, there will come a time when the Lord will call Minister and people to an account; but *what will yee doe in the end thereof?* It implyes the end will be a sad end, such an end as they shall not know what to doe when they come to give account unto God, how they have spoken and heard the Word.

4. Use. Is for direction to all such persons as would not erre, goe to God and desire him to teach thee, who is the best instructor of his people; many a poore soule is ready to say, there are so many severall opinions abroad, that I am at a stand, I know not what is truth and what is error, I know not what way to walke in, and, oh, that I could heare of that Minister that could direct me in the right way. My answer to such is, goe to God and he can teach thee the right way, he *leads his people by the paths of righteousness for his Names sake*, Psal. 23. He knows thy condition, and can proportion matter futable to thy condition. But now the soule will object; But what shall I doe that I may be taught of God? For answer to this great Question, wouldst thou be taught of God, observe these directions, and the Lord make them profitable.

First, Wouldst thou have God teach thee? then attend the meanes of grace, the preaching of the Word: I told you God teacheth the soule outwardly by the Word as well as inwardly by the Spirit, and that man or woman may question whether God teacheth them that doe neglect the outward Ministry of the Word; they are counted *blest that waite at wisdomes gates*, Pro. 8. 33. And saith the Apostle, *Despise not prophesying, try all things, and keepe that which is good*, so that that soule that would be taught of God, must attend the means, the preaching of the word is the outward meanes God hath appointed to convert a soule, and as to convert, so to build up the soule by; for by the same meanes that he converts, he builds up, and therefore it's a strange opinion, that when a man is converted by the Ministry of the Word and Spirit, that he should separate and run into a corner to build up himselfe; he that would be taught of God, must attend the outward means by which the Lord teacheth the soule.

Secondly,

Secondly, Wouldest thou have God teach thee? then be much in prayer, seeke unto God to teach thee; *David knew much of God, was able to teach his teachers, and yet he is earnest with God to teach him; shew me, thy way, O Lord, Psal. 25. 4. Lord teach me to doe thy will, Psal. 143. 11. And thou art my God, let thy good Spirit lead me into the land of uprightness.* As much as if the Prophet should have sayd, Lord, I have a perverse spirit, thy Spirit is good, let thy good Spirit lead me, so goe to God, and challenge his promise, and say, Lord, thou hast promised that the eares of thy People shall heare a voyce behinde them, saying, This is the way, walke in it, and yet shall find rest. Lord, I am an ignorant wretch, subject to erre and miscarry, Lord accomplish thy promise, shew mee the way thou wouldest have me walke in, Lord suffer me not to miscarry. And this is the second meanes.

Thirdly, Acknowledge thy ignorance, if thou wouldest have God to teach thee; there are many take up opinions with a resolution to hold them, be they right or wrong, and are as confident it is truth they hold, as if they were infallible in this life, in so much as no argument will convince them, they know enough, and scorne to be better instructed then they are. Now it is not such God will teach; but as our Saviour Christ says, *The whole need not the Physician, but those that are sicke;* so God say to these, you know enough already, you shall not need that I teach you, the knowing need not to be taught, but those that are ignorant, that is, those that see their ignorance, and acknowledge it. The way to have God teach us, is to acknowledge our ignorance; *David* in praying to God to teach him, acknowledges his ignorance, and his need of Gods teaching; the way to become wise, is to become a foole, to acknowledge our ignorance and folly; for he
that

that thinks he knoweth any thing, knoweth nothing as he ought to know, 1 Cor. 8. 2.

Fourthly, Wouldest thou have God teach thee? then eye him in all thy wayes; *Prov. 3. 6. In all thy wayes acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.* Surely that soule that thinks most upon God, and eyes him at all times, places, and companies, and seeks direction from God about every imployment, it is that soule that God will teach.

Fifthly, Wouldest thou be taught of God? then be humble, and feare to offend him; *Who so among you, feares the Lord, him will he teach, Psal. 25. 12. And he will teach the humble his way, vers. 9.* That soule that truly feares him, with a filiall feare, and lyes humble and low before the Lord, the Lord will teach; but it is not so with the proud, *he beholds them afar off, he resists them;* shew a man that hath a proud spirit, he will stand upon it, and he knows more then all the Ministers can tell him, and it is not for any to direct him, but he thinks that he is better able to direct them, he is ready to condemne all that joyn not with him in opinion; and do but observe him, and see if he run not from one thing to another, from one corrupt opinion unto another, untill at length he be fallen quite from true Christianitie; Why so? he is proud, and God doth not teach him, or if he belong to God, you shall see God will lay him as low on the other side, before ever he will comfort him; but the humble soule that lyes low at the throne of grace, crying, Lord, I am a vile wretched ignorant creature; thou art heaven, but I am hell, it is these God will teach; then wouldest thou have God teach thee? be humble.

Sixtly, Wouldest thou have God teach thee? then live in the practice of that which he hath already taught thee,

and this is the way to know more. *Joh. 7. 17. If any man do my will, he shall know my doctrine.* The way to know more, is to practice what wee know already. And these are the meanes thou shouldst use if thou wouldst have God teach thee.

But I have sought God in the use of the meanes, and *Object.* God gives me no answer.

If thou hast been inticed to some corrupt opinion, and thou thinkest it may be it is truth, and thou hast sought God concerning it, and God hath given thee no present resolution, thou must know God doth by this prove thee, to see whether thou wilt stand constant and stedfast in the truth: see *Deut. 13. 1. If there arise a Prophet, saye, Let us goe after other Gods, hearken not to him, for the Lord your God proveth you.* Is there any arise amongst you that say, let us goe after new truths, new light? the Lord proveth you by them, to see whether you will forsake him or no, and therefore he gives no present answer; but know thus much, that if thou constantly seeke him in the use of the meanes, though he give not a present answer, yet in his due time he will give an answer, and cleare up the truth to thee.

You call them heretiques and broachers of new truths and new light, which you call errors, but I cannot see but they are holy men, and live sanctified lives, and can alledge more texts of Scripture for that they hold, than you can alledge against them. *Object.*

The greater is the triall that God tryes thee with, but this can be no sufficient ground for thee to follow them presently, because they seeme to live holy lives; for if they should live profane, then none that are conscientious would regard them. An hypocrite will live a holy life outwardly, yea, shame many a child of God, yet I am

not to be of the Judgement of an hypocrite, because he lives a holy life; the devill will allow an heretique to live a holy life, because it is advantageous to his Kingdome; and Satan for his own ends transformes himselfe into an Angel of light, and therefore no marvaile if his Ministers doe so: it is said of heretiques, *They are deceitfull workers, transforming themselves into Angels of light, yea, in to the Apostles of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. 11. 13.* And in the 15. verse, they transforme themselves as though they were the *Ministers of righteousness.* So likewise it is said of heretiques, *They come in sheeps-cloathing, but inwardly are ravening wolves;* and therefore saith Christ, *beware of them,* Mat. 7. 15. And whereas thou say'st that they bring Scripture for that they speake. I answer, so doe the Papists to prove, that the bread and wine in the Sacrament is the very body and bloud of Christ, how many Scriptures doe they alledge in the foure Evangelists? And the Arminians alledge many Scriptures for to prove a childe of God may fall totally and finally from grace; and yet both very corrupt opinions; *Try the spirits, whether they be of God or no,* saith the Apostle; now the Apostle should not need to bid us try the spirits, were there not a lying spirit that imitates the true Spirit; for if the lying spirit did seduce in a way contrary to the true Spirit, there would never be so much mischief done, but the lying spirit imitates the true Spirit. It is said of seducers, *They come in the Name of Christ, and deceive many,* Mat. 24. 5. they could never doe so much mischief, did they not come in the Name of Christ. Wicked people want not holy pretences, to cover their wicked actions. Those in *Isai. 66.* that cast out the people of God say, *Let the Lord be glorified;* and they that kill the people of God think they do God good service, *Joh. 16. 2.* They would cover these wicked actions

editions with a cloake of Religion, saying, *Let the Lord be glorified*: This is the way, Beloved, to make the Scriptures a nose of wax, to grant every heretique their interpretation of Scripture, so that their alledging Scripture can be no sufficient ground for thee to yeeld to their corrupt opinions, but they coming under this notion, the greater is thy triall, and God doth prove thee, to see whether thou wilt defend the truth or no.

But thou wilt say, it may be, how cometh it to passe, *Object.* that many that have sought God, and been earnest in the use of the means, have miscarried and fallen into corrupt and strange opinions, as you call them, then, if God teacheth those that use the means?

First, Because the fault may be in their seeking, they may seeke God with an Idol in their hearts, and God may answer them according to the Idol in their hearts, that is, they may make choice of some corrupt opinion, and upon the matter are resolved to hold it, are unwilling any body should confute it, cannot indure the Minister that preacheth against it, and with might and maine defends it, are vexed that any Scripture should seeme to crosse it, and yet they will seek unto God for his approbation in it; just as *Balaam* did, you know he was hired to curse the people of *Israel* in *Numb. 22. & 23.* chap. and he was very willing withall, he lik't the motion well enough, but he would have God approve of it, and therefore he builds Altars, and offers Sacrifice, and would faine have Gods approbation in it. Now when we seeke thus, God may answer according to the Idol in the heart; and this you may see in *Ezek. 14. 4.* *Every man that setteth up his Idols in his heart, and comes to a Prophet to inquire of mee, I will answer him according to the Idols in his heart.* When a man setteth up Idols in his heart, this corrupt
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opinion, and that corrupt opinion, and then come to inquire of God, God may out of a just judgement answer them according to the Idols in their hearts. And this may be one Reason why though people seeke God and use the meanes, yet they may miscarry, the fault is in their seeking.

Secondly, It may come to passe amongst such as are godly, that they may seeke God, and use the meanes, and yet miscarry for a time, that they might be the better established in the truth, when the Lord brings them backe againe.

Thirdly, Some though they seeke God and use the meanes, yet they may miscarry, because they have not true grace, such as may be compared to the *Stony ground*, where they want roote, and these, though they doe seeke God, yet they may miscarry; for being hypocriticall professors, God will not regard their prayer; as *Job 27. 8, 9.* *What hope hath the hypocrite when God takes away his soul? Will he heare his cry?* God will not regard their prayer; and secondly, being but hypocrites, they are not under a promise of perseverance in the truth, the godly are under a promise of perseverance in the truth, and therefore though they should miscarry for a time, yet the Lord will bring them backe againe; but another that hath not true grace, when he miscarries, it may be, for any thing we know, a finall miscarriage, he though he make a glorious profession, yet is not under the promise, the other is, and every graft the Father plants into Christ, he prunes and dresses, and makes fruitfull, *Job. 15. 2.* Yea he sends his Spirit, and that leads them into all truth, *Job. 14. 16.* Now this may be another ground, why people may seeke God, and use the meanes, and yet miscarry, because the persons that seeke are not truly godly.

But may, some say, if the cause stand thus, how shall I know whether I be taught of God, yea or no? *Object.*

First, If God teach thee, then thou art very carefull in the use of the meanes, thou art carefull to observe all the direction I have given, to attend the outward meanes of grace, and thou art much in prayer, thou doest acknowledge thine ignorance, and so of all the rest. Now examine whether thou be very carefull in the use of these meanes, or no, if thou be, then surely God teacheth thee. *Answer.*

Secondly, If thou be taught of God, thou art in Covenant with him, it is one part of the Covenant of grace, *thy shall be all taught and drawne of God,* therefore examine whether thou be in Covenant with God, yea or no, if thou be not in Covenant with God, thou art not under the promise of Gods teaching of thee.

Thirdly, If thou be taught of God, then he teacheth thee to know thy selfe aright, he shews thee thy selfe in the glasse of his Word, and to know him aright, and then the more thou knowest, the more humble thou art; Doest thou lie humbly under gifts, and parts, and knowledge, and say, All is free mercy, and we have nothing but what we have received from God? Thus it is with that soule that God teacheth. *Job 42. 2, when he looked upon God, when he abhorred himselfe in dust and ashes;* and *Jer. 31. 19. after I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh, I was ashamed and confounded.* Thus it is with the soule, when God teacheth it, the more God teacheth it, the more humble it is; art thou puffed up with thy knowledge, doth it make thee esteeme of thy selfe above others? then thou mayest question, if thou hast knowledge, whether thou hast any thing else, for if thou hadst grace, thou wouldest be humble and low in thine owne eyes.

Fourthly, If God teacheth thee, then thou doest live a pious godly life; *for the grace of God which bringeth salvation, teacheth us to deny ungodlinesse, and worldly lusts, and to live holily, righteously, and soberly in this present world,* Tit. 2. 11, 12. Those that out of pretence of new light, live loosely, say the Scriptures are written traditions, and they pray not in the family, they crave not a blessing upon their meate; aske them, why so, they answer, they know their liberty by Christ, and they contemne the Ordinances of God, censure all that are not of the same opinion to be in *Babylon*, and Idolaters; it is evident they are not taught of God; for those that God teacheth, he teacheth them to *deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live holily, righteously, and soberly in this present world.*

Fiftly, If God teach thee, thou art a growing and a persevering Christian, thou doest grow in grace; for he causeth his Schollers to profit by his instructions; it is not with those that God teacheth, as it is with those that get no good by going to Schoole seven yeares, but those God teacheth, he teacheth to profit; *Unto you that feare my Name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing under his wings, and they shall goe forth and grow as the calves of the stall;* Those that God teacheth, they are a people growing in grace, and knowledge, and as they shall grow, so they shall persevere. *Isai. 40. vers. the last, They shall run and not be weary, they shall walke and not faint:* it shall not be said of them, *They are young Saints, and old Devils,* but they shall *bring forth fruit in old age,* Psal. 92. 13. And they shall be selfe-denying Christians, that is one instruction that Jesus Christ, the great Prophet of his Church, teacheth his people, *Mar. 8. 24.* Now examine thy selfe, art thou taught of God? then thou art a growing Christian? Art thou a growing selfe-denying persevering Christian?

lian? then it is a signe that God teacheth thee, and thou art a persevering Christian.

Sixtly, If God teach thee, thou doest seeke him in the use of those meanes which thou hast found him in; hast thou found him in the preaching of the Word? the day of his power hath come upon thee: and hast thou found him in prayer? thou wilt seeke him in the use of these meanes still; the way is not to separate from the Ordinances thou hast found God in, and to neglect holy duties, for then thou mayest want of Gods teaching of thee, and thou wilt not thrive then in grace, but thou must attend those meanes thou hast found God in, and not such means as thou knowest not whether thou shalt find God in, or no.

Exhortation. Is God the best teacher of his people? goe to God, and beseech him to teach thee.

First, Consider the necessitie of Gods teaching thee, as our Saviour Christ saith to *Peter*, *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me*; so, if God teach thee not, thou hast no interest in him, for all his people are taught and drawne of him; there is a necessitie of Gods teaching of thee, in respect of thy need, thou art a nothing-creature, an ignorant creature, subject to erre, and to be missed, thou doest stand in need of Gods teaching.

Secondly, Consider God is the best instructor, let this move thee to goe to him, he is able to resolve thy doubts, he can cleare up truths to thee, he can propound matter suitable to thy condition; and as he is able to teach thee, so it is his promise to teach those he enters into Covenant with, *Jer. 31. 34.* seek him in the promise.

Thirdly, Let the lessons God teacheth his people move thee to goe to him, and beseech him to teach thee, they are soule-ravishing lessons being once learned, they bring
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in soule-ravishing comfort unto the soule; the matter in them is soule-ravishing matter; transcendent matter, scholars that affect their studies, many times they are taken up with the eloquence of the matter, the lessons that God teacheth the soule, are such transcendent matter, such great mysteries, as from eternitie to eternitie, is time little enough for men and Angels to admire at, for the very Angels admire it, and desire to pry into it; then let the excellency of the matter move thee to go to God, and beseech him to teach thee.

One motive more; Consider if God teach thee, and thou learne of him, then he will teach thee the way, truth, and life, which is Christ Jesus, and then to be sure thou shalt not miscarry. Oh, Brethren, be exhorted to goe to God, and beseech him to teach you; and as at all times, so especially now in these distracted times, when there is abundance of counterfeite coine abroad, every one will view his money well when he takes it, for feare he should be cheated. Oh, Beloved, there is but one way, one truth, and life, and therefore abundance of counterfeite Religion abroad; how many plead for a toleration of all Religions, that every man might use his conscience? how many proclaime open warre against the Scriptures? how many vent out blasphemies against the persons in the Trinitie? how many cry downe the Morall Law for a rule, though it be one part of the Covenant of grace? *I will write my Lawes in your hearts, and cause you to walke in my wayes*; how many run up and downe the Country, seducing and drawing Disciples after them, some into one corrupt opinion, and some into another; and it stands every one that desires to know the truth in hand, to looke what coine they take, then doe it not I pray, seeing Gods Word doth know of but one way, truth, and life, that is safe, there is but

but one true Religion, and therefore many are seduced in these times; and the devill never had such a string to harp upon, as he hath now, new light, and new truth, and coming out of *Babylon*, many thousands will dash their braines out upon this rocke, if the Lord be not mercifull unto them; and this will terrifie them when death comes, and the day of Judgement, when many will cry out, Oh, I did thinke such a one, and such an one, would not have misled me, I tooke them to be holy men, such as knew much of God, such as were more eminent then others, but now I see they are mistaken, and I am mistaken, I am an undone man, and I am an undone woman, I have forsaken God, and his truth, and now God will forsake mee for ever. Lay these things to heart, Brethren, I tell you, the Church never had such a triall as now it hath, now are the times come that was spoken of, *in the last dayes shall come perilous times*, 2 Tim. 3. 1. in which men will not indure sound doctrine, but are turned from the truth to fables, 2 Tim. 4. 4. They come in the Name of Christ, and deceive many, and the Lord onely knows who may be seduced by them, the Lord knows but it may be my husband may be seduced, may the wife say; or the Lord knows but it may be my wife may be seduced, may the husband say; the Lord knows, may parents say, but it may be our children may be seduced and drawne from the wayes and truths of Christ, into dangerous & damnable errors, and what shall become of our children then? Consider these things, and let them move you to goe to God, and beseech him to teach you and direct you; and you that are husbands, carry your wives to God, and beseech him to teach them, and to keepe them from miscarrying; and you that are wives, carry your husbands to God, and intreat him
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to teach your husbands ; and you parents, carry your children and servants to God, and say, Oh, Lord, we live in sad times, miscarrying times, little did we thinke ever to have lived in such times, Lord keepe us close to thy selfe, and establish us in the truth ; Lord keepe my husband, keepe my wife, keepe our children and servants, and carry your neighbours to God, and beseech him to looke upon them, and stablish them in the truth. And this is a notable means to keep us from miscarrying.

And lastly, when God hath answered your prayers, and setled you in the truth, thy selfe, or thy husband, or wife, or children, or neighbours, then give him the praise and glory of it : O Lord, such a one had like to have miscarried, but thou hast setled him in the truth, blessed be thy Name for it. The Lord make these things profitable and effectually by the inward operation of his Spirit, who is the best teacher of his people.

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